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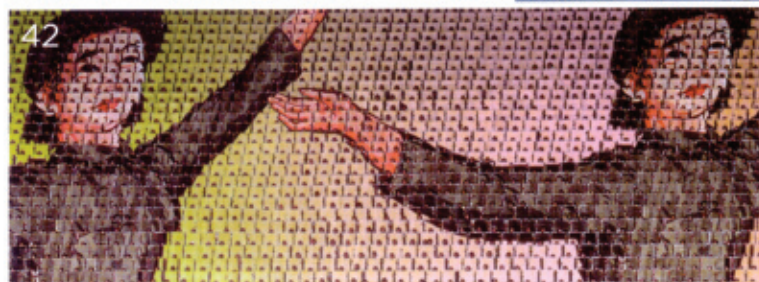
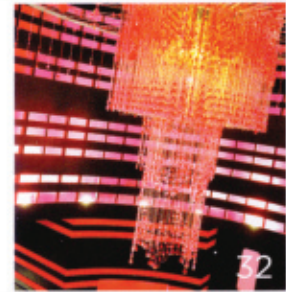
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## MAMMA ROCKING CHAIR

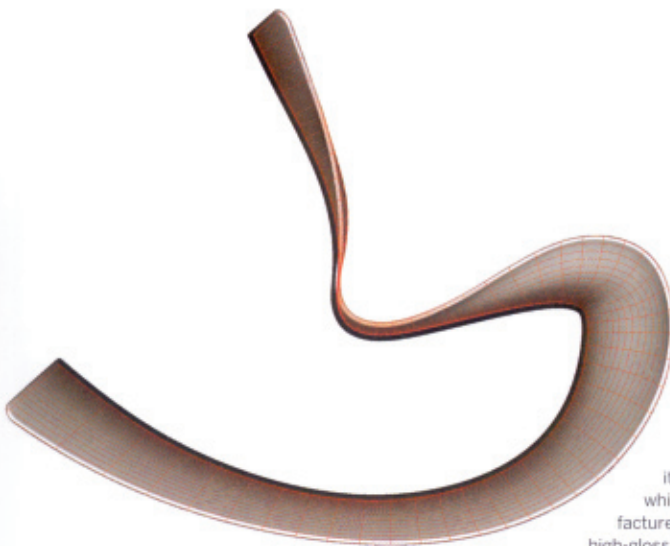
With the imminent arrival of his first child, Patrick Messier proved himself to be a responsive husband – and a capable designer. A few months before his wife gave birth, she expressed the need for a rocking chair. But Messier was dead set against what he saw for sale; he simply found existing rockers ugly. Instead, the Montreal-based industrial designer decided to create one. He envisioned a suspended ribbon with full and sensuous curves, a rocker that comforts like a mother. “When I sketched it, I saw the chair in 3-D in my head,” he says. “The drawing was a reminder. Looking at it again, I thought back to the details and the form.” Messier knew he would need a material sturdy enough to safely support the load of a person weighing more than 200 pounds. “The moment I imagined the floating ribbon, it was obvious there was only one material I could use to create that shape: fibreglass.”



RUBAN FIXÉ  
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From the sketch, Messier designed the chair directly on 3-D CAD software. “There wasn’t ever a model,” he says. He derived the curved base, which differs from the arcs of run-of-the-mill rockers, from a grid based on the Fibonacci numbers. This mathematical sequence (in which each number is the sum of the two preceding numbers) occurs frequently in nature and governs such things as the growth of populations and plants, and the spiral pattern of nautilus shells. As a result, Messier considers the elliptical line of Mamma’s base more natural; it also lowers the centre of gravity. The tail that fans out at the back prevents tipping, while the three-dimensional curves ensure the rocker doesn’t buckle or flex. The manufacturer hand-moulded the chair from multiple layers of fibreglass and finished it with high-gloss urethane.

When Mamma was unveiled to the public at the Interior Design Show in Toronto earlier this year, Messier couldn’t keep the people off the display platform: “They wanted to try the chair. The response was way beyond my expectations.” Despite that, a limited run of only 20 numbered chairs will be manufactured in 2005. “I don’t believe in mass production,” says Messier. “I’d prefer to do high-end products that are for life-long use. Sell less of higher quality.” Available in any custom colour, Mamma measures 117 cm long, with a height of 95 cm and a width of 67 cm. “When you’re sitting in the chair, it’s like floating,” he says. “It’s a different feeling, a new chair experience.”

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AUSTIN MACDONALD

